



Loving God with All of You_(Part 5)

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I find it remarkable in the New Testament that so much spiritual warfare revolves around the mind.

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:3-5).

Notice that it says, "Every lofty thing raised up against the KNOWLEDGE of God." It isn't exalting itself against God Himself. Don't you find that interesting? Satan doesn't seem care if you believe in God. But he does care if you believe rightly about God. For if you believe in the one true God and in Jesus Christ whom He has sent, then you have the power and the knowledge aiding you with the Holy Spirit. One of the Holy Spirit's primary roles is to

guide us into truth (John 16:13-15). And with Him there is more power than all Hell could generate.

But Satan tempts us to mental laziness, distracts us from reflecting on the wonderful thoughts God has called us to think about Him and like Him. Satan also distorts insights about ourselves, our defects of character, and the image of God we bear. If we succumb to him, he puts us in a place of spiritual defeat.

This is important to understand. This is not about one-time temptations. This is about strengthening a part of our souls that is vital to being a whole human person. Most of the vices we deal with from day to day have to do with the beliefs we hold. Satan doesn't force us to make sinful choices. But he does a devilish job of making us doubt God's character and over-emphasize the importance of our desires. Satan's strategy is plain: to get humans to avoid true thoughts of God and true thoughts about humanity's problem and ultimate purpose. This is the temptation Satan gave Jesus (Matt 4, Luke 4), and it is the temptation he gives us.

Jesus knows this. He places a high importance on not only loving God with all of our heart, soul, and

strength, but also with our mind. If this component is left neglected, we will not find spiritual success in our walk toward God's divine purposes.

That said, let me add that the apologetic enterprise of evangelism in the New Testament goes hand in hand with spiritual formation. It is not only to give answers to others to believe in the truth of Jesus Christ, but also to build a stronger defense against spiritual wickedness in high places. Apologetics is just as much for the maturing Christian as it is for helping the non-Christian see Christ clearly.

A few weeks ago, I had a conversation with a graduate from UC Berkeley who recently came to Christ. During the last two years of her search for truth, she was told by many Christians, "You think too much. Don't make it so complicated. Just believe." But this is exactly what she had a hard time with. She believed that if God did exist and that if He made her, that He would give evidence to satisfy her God-given mind. Satan's warfare tried to thwart her from appropriately understanding God. But after a long search, and in spite of many discouraging words about her intellectual quest from Christians and non-Christians alike, she bowed her knee to Christ. A few months later she attended a talk I gave

on loving God with our minds and she said it was extremely affirming. Now she wants to formally study apologetics, philosophy, and theology, to help others who struggled as she did. She wants to love God with her whole person. She wants to have the right knowledge of God and KNOW she has the right knowledge of God. And, now, because she engaged God with her mind, her spiritual growth has been exponentially climbing.

I share that as a testimony that without a hungry mind for God, our spiritual lives, however good we may find them to be, will be dramatically stunted. We need to have appropriate knowledge of the God we are worshiping and how we fit into his grand design. It is no secret. It just takes diligent work. David said that understanding is better than gold. He was right. Seeking after God, our whole lives long, is a hunt well worth the reward.

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